

How to Become a Friend of Allāh ﷻ

**By
Shaykh Mufti Saiful Islām**



“In the Name of Allāh, the Most Beneficent,
the Most Merciful”

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Introduction

All praises are due to Allāh ﷻ. May peace, salutations and blessings be upon our guide and mentor, the final and beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, upon his noble Sahābahs ﷺ, Tābi'een and those who follow their noble lifestyles until the Day of Judgement. Āmeen!

Maulāna Ashraf Ali Thānwi ﷺ states that there are a number of acts that may lead the creation towards a strong relationship with Allāh ﷻ. These actions include excessive remembrance of Allāh ﷻ, observance of Sunnah in all matters, keeping company with the pious who have a strong relationship with Allāh ﷻ, being thankful for the bounties of Allāh ﷻ, being steadfast in following the rulings of Shari'ah and finally, asking Allāh ﷻ (Du'ā) abundantly.

The friends of Allāh ﷻ have been described in detail in the Holy Qur'ān and Ahādeeth. The pious predecessors (Salafus-Sāliheen) are ones who created this bond with Allāh ﷻ to attain His friendship as He is the sole Creator of all material and immaterial things. It is only through Allāh's ﷻ friendship that an individual will achieve happiness in this life and the Hereafter, hence eliminate worries, sadness, depression, anxiety and misery in this world.

In this book, my beloved teacher and Shaykh, Mufti Saiful Islām Sāhib identifies a simple and comprehensive formula to become a friend of Allāh ﷻ referenced by the Holy Qur'ān and Ahādeeth, as well as mentioning piety, respect, achievements and anecdotes about our pious predecessors.

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May Allāh ﷻ accept the efforts of all those who have participated in the writing and compilation of this book, especially my beloved teacher and Shaykh, Mufti Saiful Islām Sāhib and reward them in the life of this world and the Hereafter. Āmeen!

Maulāna Ismāeel Aziz

Graduate of JKN

October 2016/Muharram 1438

How to Become a Friend of Allāh ﷻ

**A Simple and Comprehensive Prescription for
Becoming a Friend of Allāh ﷻ.**

**A lecture delivered in Jāmiah Khātamun Nabiyeen Institute,
Bradford at the Spiritual Gathering and Dhikr Majlis.**

Fear of Allāh ﷻ

Honourable scholars, elders, students, brothers and sisters,

Today, I want to share with you a prescription prescribed by our pious predecessors of how to achieve the friendship and closeness to our Creator, Allāh ﷻ.

Allāh ﷻ states in the Holy Qur'ān:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

“O’ you who have believed! Fear (the punishment of) Allāh (by doing good deeds and abstaining from sins) and stay (associate) with the truthful.” (9:119)

In this verse, Allāh ﷻ is addressing the Believers, His true servants and He is commanding them two things:

- 1) Fear Allāh ﷻ.
- 2) Stay in the company of the truthful and the pious.

In many verses of the Holy Qur'ān, Allāh ﷻ orders us to adopt Taqwā. For example:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا

“O’ you who have believed! Fear Allāh and speak what is right (speak the truth and with justice).” (33:70)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

“O’ you who have believed! Fear Allāh (His punishment always) as He should be feared (by obeying all His commands) and do not die except as Muslims (do not do anything that will remove you from the fold of Islām and dedicate your life and death solely for Islām).

(3:102)

Why do we need to adopt Taqwā? Why does Allāh ﷻ constantly emphasise this? He merely wants us to be successful and to preserve our Imān, so that we could achieve the eternal blessings of the Hereafter. If Taqwā goes out of our lives, then that will gradually effect our Imān and ultimately, Allāh ﷻ forbid, the treasure of Imān will slip away from ourselves, sometimes, while we do not even realise it. Hence, Allāh ﷻ orders us to adopt Taqwā to maintain and preserve our Imān. So in essence, Allāh ﷻ is kindly and graciously saying,

“O’ My beloved servants, preserve your Imān by adopting Taqwā.”

What is Taqwā?

Taqwā comes from the word ‘Wiqāyah’ which means a barrier or a shield. In other words, make your Taqwā a barrier from committing sins and from omitting the orders of Allāh ﷻ.

Allāmah Ālousi ﷺ explains Taqwā in his Tafseer, Roohul-Ma’āni,

خَلِّ الذُّنُوبَ صَغِيرَهَا وَكَبِيرَهَا ذَاكَ التُّقَى لَا تَحْقِرَنَّ صَغِيرَةً إِنَّ الْجِبَالَ مِنَ الْحَصَى

“Abandon and leave all sins, whether minor or major; that is Taqwā. Do not trivialise a minor sin; indeed, mountains are formed from pebbles.”

How beautifully Uwais Qarni ﷺ says,

Fear of Allāh ﷻ

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“Abandon and leave all sins, whether minor or major; that is Taqwā. Do not trivialise a minor sin; indeed, mountains are formed from pebbles.”

How beautifully Uwais Qarni ﷺ says,

إِنْ صَغَّرْتَ ذَنْبَكَ فَقَدْ صَغَّرْتَ رَبَّكَ وَإِنْ عَظَّمْتَ ذَنْبَكَ فَقَدْ عَظَّمْتَ رَبَّكَ

“If you trivialise your sin, then you have trivialised (belittled) your Lord, your Creator, and if you have understood the severity of your sin, then you have indeed understood the Majesty of your Lord.”

For this reason, scholars mention regarding those sins categorised as minor, that if a person perpetrates them by trivialising and belittling them, then even though the sin is minor for all people in general, for that specific individual, it would be major.

Therefore, we need to create a barrier from committing, firstly, a Harām act - any act which is clearly forbidden in the Holy Qur’ān or Ahādeeth for example, gambling, consuming liquor, theft, adultery, taking drugs etc. These are all Harām. We need to abstain from them at all costs. Secondly, we need to create a barrier from committing those acts which are Makrooh Tahreemi – close to Harām, for example, facing the Qiblah during the call of nature. These are two types of acts which we need to save ourselves from committing at all times. So, make Taqwā a barrier between you and these sins.

Then, there are acts that we need to carry out. In other words, we need to adopt Taqwā to that level that it becomes a barrier which saves us from omitting firstly, a Fardh act (e.g. the five daily prayers), secondly, a Wājib act (e.g. Witr Salāh or Sadaqatul-Fitr) and thirdly, a Sunnat-e-Muakkadah act (e.g. the 2 Rak’āt Sunnah before the Fardh of Fajr Salāh). So, our Taqwā should be to that level that we make it a barrier from omitting Fardh, Wājib or Sunnat-e-Muakkadah acts. Once we have achieved this, then each one of us will be a Muttaqi (God-conscious) and will become successful, Inshā-Allāh.

Tawbah - Repentance

Our Nafs, in particular the Nafs Ammārah, is always prompting us coupled with Shaytān, to commit Harām and Makrooh-e-Tahreemi acts or to omit a Fardh, Wājib or Sunnat-e-Muakkadah. Hence, every time any of these are perpetrated, we need to use the tool of Tawbah (repentance) to combat this. Therefore, when we wrong ourselves and commit any evil, we should immediately utilise the tool of Tawbah, raise our hands in supplication and plead to Allāh ﷻ for forgiveness. How beautifully Allāh ﷻ mentions this in the Holy Qur’ān:

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا الذُّنُوبَ بِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرِ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

“(Those who do good deeds are) those who, if they carry out any immoral act or oppress themselves (by committing any sin), they think of Allāh and repent for their sins. Who can pardon sins besides Allāh?” (3:135)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said,

التَّائِبُ مِنَ الذَّنْبِ كَمَنْ لَا ذَنْبَ لَهُ

“One who repents from sin is like one who has no sin.”
(Ibn Mājah, Tabarāni)

Allāh ﷻ is so Merciful; He is always ready to accept our Tawbah at all times. It is we who are careless and neglectful. Allāh ﷻ reassures us not to lose hope:

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ
الدُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

“Say, O’ My bondsmen (servants) who have wronged their souls (by committing disbelief or other sins)! Never lose hope of Allāh’s mercy (do not abstain from seeking forgiveness, thinking that you will not be forgiven). Verily, Allāh forgives all sins. Undoubtedly, He is the Most-Forgiving, the Most-Merciful.” (39:53)

So, every time we commit a sin, we should immediately resort to Tawbah and wipe out the sin. At the same time, we need to adopt a method on a permanent basis, so that we do not slip towards sins and crimes. Hence we should search for the righteous servants of Allāh ﷺ, with whom we can socialise and associate and become like them. If a person stays with a good person who performs his five times Salāh, then in six months, for example, he will become a Musalli as well. Additionally, vice-versa, if a person associates with a drug dealer, then soon he too will become a drug dealer.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said,

الْوَحْدَةُ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ جَلِيسِ السُّوءِ وَالْجَلِيسُ الصَّالِحُ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ الْوَحْدَةِ

“Solitude is better than being in bad company and being in good company is better than solitude.” (Baihaqi)

Allāh ﷻ has prescribed a permanent solution by informing us, “O’ My bondsmen, My beloved servants, if you want to preserve and safeguard your Imān – the invaluable treasure, then adopt Taqwā and if you want to

retain your Taqwā, then stay in the company of the righteous.” Subhān-Allāh, how amazingly Allāh ﷻ has taught us how to become His beloved ones.

Our pious predecessors have mentioned in particular, five deeds which will make one achieve the status of Wilāyat (becoming a friend of Allāh ﷻ), then Inshā-Allāh, one will become a true friend of Allāh ﷻ. In general, all the believers are the friends of Allāh ﷻ as He says:

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ

“Allāh is the friend of those who have Imān, bringing them out from the multitudes of darkness into the light (of Islām).” (2:257)

However, by adopting these five deeds, Inshā-Allāh, we will be close friends of Allāh ﷻ. What are these five things?

1. Suhbat-Ahlullāh – The Company of the Righteous

Search for a spiritual guide who has the right qualities of a true guide and stay in his company. Men will benefit by staying in his company and observing his actions and deeds, whilst women will benefit from his talks and literature.

The Holy Qur’ān says:

وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

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The Holy Qur’ān says:

وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

“Stay in the company of the truthful.” (9:119)

How long should we stay? Allāmah Ālousi ﷺ says,

خَالِطُوهُمْ حَتَّى تَكُونُوا مِثْلَهُمْ

"Stay with them (associate with them) until you become like them."

We have seen and read about the pious people that they spent their entire lives in the company of their Shaykhs and spiritual guides until death separated them. Today, in this materialistic world, there is no time for this virtuous act. However, unfortunately, we have time to spend and waste with our friends and colleagues.

2. Punctuality in Dhikrullāh (the Remembrance of Allāh ﷻ)

Whatever Dhikr the Shaykh has prescribed, fulfil it; it will be a source of Barakah (blessings). Dhikr is a very vast word which encompasses all types of remembrance and all types of obedience. Allāh ﷻ says in the Holy Qur'an,

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

"Indeed, with the Dhikr of Allāh hearts are satisfied." (13:28)

In another verse, He says:

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ

"Therefore remember Me, I will remember you." (2:152)

In Sūrah Al-Imrān, He says whilst describing the intelligent people,

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَى جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ

وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

"(Those who have intelligence are) those who remember Allāh while standing, sitting and lying down (they do not forget Allāh at any time) and they think about the creation of the heavens and the earth (so that they may be able to see Allāh's greatness in this). (Then amazed by Allāh's creation, they say,) 'Our Lord, You have not created all of this without a purpose (these things certainly display Your power and greatness and have not been created in vain). We glorify Your purity (none can ever be equal to You), so save us from the punishment of the Fire (of Jahannam).'" (3:191)

In Sūrah Dhar, Allāh ﷻ says,

وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَاسْجُدْ لَهُ وَسَبِّحْهُ لَيْلًا طَوِيلًا

"Remember the Name of your Lord (engage in Dhikr and Salāh) morning and evening. Prostrate to Him (perform Salāh) during the night and glorify Him during the long portion of the night." (76:25)

In Sūrah Ahzāb, He says,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا. وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا

"O' you who have Imān! Remember Allāh in abundance (at all times) and glorify Him (especially during the) morning and evening." (33:41-42)

The sacred Name of Allāh ﷻ carries the blessing, taste, sweetness, thrill

and peace of mind that is truly experienced by those who have practised and remained absorbed in His Dhikr for a considerable amount of time. The Name of Allāh ﷻ brings joy to the heart and peace to the mind as mentioned in the Qur'anic verse:

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“Indeed, with the Dhikr of Allāh the hearts are satisfied.” (13:28)

Advice of Shaykh Ahmad Shafee Sāhib

In 2007, I had the opportunity to visit the great institute of learning and the biggest Dārul-Uloom in the whole of Bangladesh, Mueenul Islām Hathazari in Chitagong. When reaching there, we had the privilege of meeting the principal and Shaykh-ul-Hadeeth, Shaykh-ul-Islām, Allāmah Ahmad Shafee Sāhib, one of the great students and disciple of Shaykh-ul-Islām, Shaykh Husain Ahmad Madani ﷺ. After being graced with his company and having breakfast together, I, at the time of departure, requested for some words of advice. What beautiful, comprehensive and concise words of wisdom he imparted!

He addressed myself and the guests and said, “Make three things compulsory on yourselves; you will achieve success:

1) **صُحْبَةُ أَهْلِ اللَّهِ** - Company of the friends of Allāh ﷻ

2) **كَثْرَةُ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ** - Abundance of Dhikr of Allāh ﷻ

3) **تَفَكُّرُ فِي خَلْقِ اللَّهِ** - Contemplating on the creation of Allāh ﷻ

Allāhu-Akbar! What profound advice! May Allāh ﷻ give us the Tawfeeq to carry out this advice in our lives. Āmeen!

On a daily basis, we need to fix certain A'māl (actions) for ourselves, especially those which are mentioned in the Ahādeeth and those prescribed by the Shaykh.

Daily Ma'moolāt (Practices)

Recite Sūrah Yāseen regularly in the morning. The Hadeeth says:

مَنْ قَرَأَ يُسَ فِي صَدْرِ النَّهَارِ قُضِيَتْ حَوَائِجُهُ

“The person who recites Sūrah Yāseen in the morning, all his needs are fulfilled.” (Dārimi)

Recite Sūrah Mulk before retiring to bed. The Hadeeth narrated by Sayyidunā Abū Hurairah ﷺ states that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّ سُورَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ ثَلَاثُونَ آيَةً شَفَعَتْ لِرَجُلٍ حَتَّى غُفِرَ لَهُ وَهِيَ تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ

“Indeed in the Holy Qur'ān, there is a Sūrah consisting of thirty verses which intercedes for a person (its reader) until he is forgiven. This is Sūrah Mulk.” (Abū Dāwood, Nasai, Ibn Mājah)

Imām Tirmizi ﷺ narrates on the authority of Sayyidunā Jābir ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ would not sleep until he recited Sūrah Mulk and Sūrah Sajdah. (Tirmizi, Ahmad)

Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Masood ﷺ reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

مَنْ قَرَأَ سُورَةَ الْوَاقِعَةِ فِي كُلِّ لَيْلَةٍ لَمْ تُصِبْهُ فَاقَةٌ أَبَدًا وَكَانَ ابْنُ مَسْعُودٍ يَأْمُرُ بَنَاتَهُ
يَقْرَأْنَ بِهَا كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ

“He who recites Sūrah Wāqiah every night would never encounter poverty.” Therefore, Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Masood ﷺ used to instruct his daughters to recite Sūrah Wāqiah every night. (Baihaqi)

Let us create a strong bond with the Holy Qur'ān. The Holy Qur'ān, being the word of Allāh ﷻ is superior to all other discourses; its reciting and teaching is superior to everything else.

Our free time should be utilised in reciting the Tasbeeh, Durood Shareef and seeking the knowledge of Deen.

May Allāh ﷻ enable us to carry out the Dhikr of Allāh ﷻ.

3. Staying Away From Sins

Save yourself from committing any sins. We all know what sins are. Anything which displeases Allāh ﷻ is a sin. Do not try to categorise it as minor and major; disobedience to Allāh ﷻ is never a minor sin. As mentioned earlier, the quote of Allāmah Ālousi ﷺ, “Leave all sins whether minor

nor or major; that is (the true) Taqwā. Never belittle a sin; indeed mountains are formed from small pebbles.”

In the matter of sins, we need to stay away from the sin and also keep the sin away from ourselves. For example, a person should not go to the pub to drink wine, nor should he let wine be brought to him. He should not go to a place where there is a sin or immorality and at the same time, stop any of these situations taking place at his home or place of work. So, we need to keep the sin away from ourselves and not only keep away from the sin. In Arabic, the word, مُحَافَظَتْ (Muhāfazat) has been used to explain this two-sided effort. From both sides, keep away from sin and keep the sin away from you.

4. Stay Away From the Avenues of Sins

The beauty of our religion Islām, is that it strictly prohibits and controls all those channels, means and avenues leading to the sin. For example, where Islām has forbidden the consumption of alcohol, it has not stopped at only making the drinking of alcohol prohibited. Rather, to reinforce the prohibition, it has ruled out so many avenues associated with alcohol. For example, the manufacturing, transporting, handling, selling and serving of alcohol are all forbidden, just as the drinking of alcohol is prohibited.

Another example is the prohibition of idol-worship. All avenues leading to it, for example, model-making, drawing and carving of animated objects have all been prohibited.

People used to worship the sun at fixed times. Accordingly, even the performance of Salāh at sunrise, zenith (noon) and sunset have been prohibited to dispel the notion of imitating sun-worshiping, even if the perform-

er of Salāh is not actually worshipping the sun. Nevertheless, the remotest resemblance has been removed.

Avenues of Adultery and Fornication

Adultery is an extremely grave sin which the Holy Qur'ān warns of:

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزِّنَا إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا

“Do not go near to adultery; indeed, it is a shameless act and the worst of ways.” (17:32)

Islām has restricted all avenues which lead to adultery, for example, the free intermingling of non-Mahram men and women and the emergence of Muslim ladies without Hijāb. When a need arises to emerge, then it is permissible with full Hijāb and modesty, concealing ones beauty to the extent that wearing noisy jewellery is wrong. Why? The sound of jewellery is enough to instigate desires in a person. Similarly, the applying of strong perfume is forbidden. It appears in a Hadeeth of Tirmizi that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, “A woman who emerges outside, applying strong perfume and passes by men is an adulteress.” (Tirmizi)

Men are instructed to communicate with a non-Mahram woman, by lowering the gaze and protecting the modesty. All these instructions are given to prevent the ultimate act of adultery. Thus, Islām restricts all avenues which lead to sins.

5. Following the Sunnah

The last and final point is to adhere to the Sunnah – the way shown to us

by our Holy Prophet ﷺ. Allāh ﷻ says,

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

“Say (O’ Muhammad), ‘If you love Allāh, then follow me (Muhammad); Allāh will love you (He will reward you and grant you numerous material and spiritual blessings) and forgive your sins. Allāh is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.’” (3:29)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is so beloved to Allāh ﷻ that anyone who follows him will become the beloved of Allāh ﷻ as well. We need to follow every Sunnah of his in our lives to gain the success of both worlds. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said,

مَنْ أَحَبَّ سُنَّتِي فَقَدْ أَحَبَّنِي وَمَنْ أَحَبَّنِي كَانَ مَعِيَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ

“The one who loves my Sunnah, he loves me and the one who loves me will be with me in Jannah.” (Mishkāt)

Sahābah’s Love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ

Somebody asked Sayyidunā Ali ؓ, “How much was the Sahābah’s love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ?” He replied, “By Allāh ﷻ! To us the Holy Prophet ﷺ was dearer than our riches, our children and our mothers and was more cherished than a drink of cold water at the time of severe thirst.”

There is no exaggeration in Sayyidunā Ali’s ؓ statement. As a matter of

fact, the Sahābah ﷺ reached this state because of the perfection of their Imān.

Sayyidunā Anas ﷺ states,

ثَلَاثٌ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ وَجَدَ حَلَاوَةَ الْإِيمَانِ أَنْ يَكُونَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ
مَنْ سِوَاهُمَا وَأَنْ يُحِبَّ الْمَرْءَ لَا يُحِبُّهُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ وَأَنْ يَكْرَهُ أَنْ يَعُودَ فِي الْكُفْرِ كَمَا يَكْرَهُ أَنْ
يُقْذَفَ فِي النَّارِ

“There are three things which, when found in a person, enable him to taste the sweetness of real Imān. These are: When Allāh ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ are dearer to him than anything else in this world.

When his love for anyone is solely for the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ.

When turning to Kufr (disbelief) is disliked to him as being thrown into the fire.” (Bukhārī)

When Sayyidunā Zaid ﷺ was being hanged, Abū Sufyān ﷺ (who had not embraced Islām yet) taunted him and asked whether he would not like that the Holy Prophet ﷺ be in his place. Sayyidunā Zaid ﷺ replied, taking an oath in Allāh's ﷻ Name that he would not even like a thorn to prick the Holy Prophet ﷺ whilst he (Sayyidunā Zaid ﷺ) was sitting comfortably in his home. Abū Sufyān ﷺ commented that he had never seen anyone display that much love and affection in his entire life, as the Companions ﷺ of the Holy Prophet ﷺ showed for him.

The Ulamā have listed many signs which demonstrate love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Qādhi Iyādh ﷺ states that if a person loves a thing, then he gives it preference over all things, otherwise, that claim is mere lip-service.

Love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ is demonstrated by the main and important factor of following in his footsteps, choosing his path and obeying his statements and actions. He should bring into action the injunctions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He should abstain from that which the Holy Prophet ﷺ prohibited. He should follow the Sunnah in all conditions – happiness, grief, affluence and poverty.

Thought Provoking Incident

Let me share with you an incident from the pages of history which demonstrates the love the Sahābah ﷺ had for even the minute Sunnats of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Sayyidunā Hudhaifah Ibn Yamān ﷺ was a prominent Sahābi to whom the Holy Prophet ﷺ told his secrets. He was therefore known as the bearer of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ secrets.

Persia (modern-day Iran) was a superpower at the time and their way of life was famous all over the world at the time. Although the Romans were also a superpower during those days, the people of Persia were famously known for their cleanliness. It was at the time when the Muslim army was about to attack the Persian army that the Persian Commander invited the Muslims for negotiations. Amongst the Muslim group was Sayyidunā Hudhaifah ﷺ. When they arrived, the Persians had some food prepared for them to eat, so the Muslims sat down to eat. As they were eating, a morsel of food slipped from Sayyidunā Hudhaifah's ﷺ hand and fell down.

Now, the teaching of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is that when this happens, a person should pick up the food and eat it because he never knows in which morsel the blessings of the food are found. As Sayyidunā Hudhaifah ﷺ bent down to pick the morsel of food, the person next to him

fact, the Sahābah ﷺ reached this state because of the perfection of their Imān.

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بِمَا سِوَاهُمَا وَأَنْ يُحِبَّ الْمَرْءَ لَا يُحِبُّهُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ وَأَنْ يَكْرَهُ أَنْ يَعُودَ فِي الْكُفْرِ كَمَا يَكْرَهُ أَنْ
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nudged him to ask what he was doing, because he was not to do that in the presence of the Persians who would think that it was a dirty thing to do.

Now, listen to the unique reply Sayyidunā Hudhaifah ؓ gave him. He said,

أَتُرْكَ سُنَّةَ حَبِيبِي لَهُوَ لَاءِ الْحَقِّ

“Should I leave out the Sunnah of my beloved for the sake of these fools?”

He did not care what the Persians thought about his action or whether they would laugh, mock or feel bad about it. He could not leave out the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and therefore, he picked up the morsel, cleaned it and ate it. Subhān-Allāh! This was so true about the Sahābah ؓ.

Love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ

I would like to conclude by mentioning another incident from the lives of the Sahābah ؓ which will clearly demonstrate their true and intense love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. When the treaty of Hudaibiyah was taking place, the Quraish of Makkah sent Urwah Ibn Mas'ood Thaqafi to speak to the Muslims. Urwa was a very intelligent and observant person. As soon as he came to the Muslim camp, he looked at everything very carefully and even while talking to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he took notice of how the Sahābah ؓ behaved.

When he went back to the Quraish in Makkah, he explained the Sahābah's ؓ exceptional conduct towards the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He said, “O my people! I have been sent to the kings of Rome, Persia and Abyssinia (Ethiopia). However, I swear by Allāh ﷻ that I have never seen the com-

panions of anyone show as much respect to their king as I have seen the Companions of Muhammad ﷺ show to him. I swear by Allāh ﷻ that even when he spits, one of them puts out his hand to get it. When he performs Wudhu, they compete with each other to get the water falling off his body and when he gives a command, they run to carry it out. When he speaks, they all become silent and they always look at him with great love and affection.”

It is difficult to use better words than these to explain the respect and love the Sahābah ؓ showed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. When a person is praised by his enemy, the words carry much more weight. Blessed were those people who managed to soften the hard hearts of their enemies by their excellent behaviour and manners.

Sayyidunā Anas Ibn Mālik ؓ says that whenever the Sahābah ؓ needed to see the Holy Prophet ﷺ for something important, they would knock with their nails rather than their knuckles. In this way, they would not be disturbing him with too much noise and he would still be able to hear them. Allāhu Akbar!

May Allāh ﷻ inculcate the true love of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in our daily lives so that we can become successful like the Sahābah ؓ. May Allāh ﷻ give us the Tawfeeq (strength) to carry out the five A'māl (practises) mentioned by our pious predecessors so that we can become the true friends of Allāh ﷻ. Āmeen!

And our last call is that all praise is for Allāh ﷻ, the Lord of the Worlds.

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And our last call is that all praise is for Allāh ﷻ, the Lord of the Worlds.

Who Are the Salafus-Sāliheen?

A lecture delivered in Loughborough Jāmi Masjid, Midlands expounding on the amazing lives and incidents of the Pious Predecessors.

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ أَمَّا بَعْدُ
فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ
اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا
ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

“Allāh is pleased with the first to lead the way from the Muhājireen, the Ansār and those who followed them with sincerity. Allāh is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. He has prepared for them such gardens beneath which rivers flow in which they shall live forever. This is the ultimate success.” (9:100)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, “The best of the people are my generation, then those who will succeed them, and then those who will succeed them. After them, people will come who will give testimony before swearing an oath and will swear an oath before giving testimony.” (Bukhāri, Muslim)

Who are the Salafus - Sāliheen?

The word Salaf comes from the root word ‘Salafa,’ which means the things from the past but here, it refers to our predecessors. Sāliheen means pious so therefore, Salafus-Sāliheen means pious predecessors.

So the question is who are our pious predecessors?

To answer this, we will go one step back and focus briefly on the life and Seerah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Allāh ﷻ says,

لَئِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

“Say, ‘If you love Allāh, then follow me, Allāh will love you and forgive your sins. Allāh is Most Forgiving and Most Merciful.’” (3:31)

In another verse, Allāh ﷻ says,

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

“Indeed for you in the Messenger of Allāh is a perfect example.” (33:21)

Hence, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sent to this world for the guidance of mankind for eternal success and the direct recipients and beneficiaries of this guidance and these blessings were the Companions ﷺ. They embedded and embraced his teachings whole heartedly and became the glittering and luminous light of the era.

They excelled to such heights that was unimaginable. Those same individuals who were barbarians and ruthless, evil people who nobody even bothered to rule over, had become the role models and exemplary personalities for all time to come.

These blessed souls became so beloved to the Creator (Allāh ﷻ) that He sent the certificate of acknowledgement and appreciation from above the seven Heavens.

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ

“Allāh is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him.” (98:8)

He made the Sahābah ﷺ the criterion, the touch stone between truth and falsehood.

He proclaims,

فَإِنْ آمَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ اهْتَدَوْا

“If they believe upon the similar things and similar ways to what you believe, then indeed they are truly guided.” (2:137)

Like the verse I recited in the beginning of my speech,

وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ

“Allāh is pleased with the first to lead the way from the Muhājireen, the Ansār and those who followed them with sincerity.” (9:100)

There are numerous verses in the Holy Qur’ān speaking about the greatness and significance of the Companions ﷺ.

Likewise, the books of Ahādeeth are full with the virtues and status of the Companions ﷺ like the Hadeeth narrated at the beginning,

خَيْرُ النَّاسِ قَرْنِي ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ

“The best of my people are my generation and then those who will succeed them and then those who will succeed them.” (Bukhārī, Muslim)

Allāh ﷻ says,

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ
رَحِيمٌ

“Say, ‘If you love Allāh, then follow me, Allāh will love you and forgive your sins. Allāh is Most Forgiving and Most Merciful.’” (3:31)

In another verse, Allāh ﷻ says,

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ
“Indeed for you in the Messenger of Allāh is a perfect example.” (33:21)

Hence, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sent to this world for the guidance of mankind for eternal success and the direct recipients and beneficiaries of this guidance and these blessings were the Companions ﷺ. They embedded and embraced his teachings whole heartedly and became the glittering and luminous light of the era.

They excelled to such heights that was unimaginable. Those same individuals who were barbarians and ruthless, evil people who nobody even bothered to rule over, had become the role models and exemplary personalities for all time to come.

These blessed souls became so beloved to the Creator (Allāh ﷻ) that He sent the certificate of acknowledgement and appreciation from above the seven Heavens.

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ

“Allāh is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him.” (98:8)

He made the Sahābah ﷺ the criterion, the touch stone between truth and falsehood.

He proclaims,

فَإِنْ آمَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ اهْتَدَوْا

“If they believe upon the similar things and similar ways to what you believe, then indeed they are truly guided.” (2:137)

Like the verse I recited in the beginning of my speech,

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“The best of my people are my generation and then those who will succeed them and then those who will succeed them.” (Bukhāri, Muslim)

The question is, how did they become so successful whilst we are wondering in confusion in the darkness of this world?

Three Reasons

How have they become a beacon of light for mankind for all times to come?

As mentioned earlier, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is our role model and generally in this world, every famous person we follow, we will follow and emulate him for 3 reasons. I will encapsulate this in 3 Arabic words,

جَمَالٌ – كَمَالٌ – نَوَانٌ

in other words, every celebrity is followed either for their beauty (جَمَالٌ) or excellence (كَمَالٌ) or their contribution and achievement (نَوَانٌ). There is no 4th reason for emulating any famous person.

Under these 3 reasons, let us put a torch-light on the personality of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Why should we follow him?

First Reason: جَمَالٌ (Beauty)

Let us see what is said about his beauty. How handsome was he? The books of Ahādeeth are full of the description of his extra ordinary features. After describing him, the Sahābah ﷺ would say,

مَا رَأَيْتُ مِثْلَهُ قَطُّ

“We have not seen anyone like him!”

i.e. one cannot fully describe his beauty. Sayyidah Āishah ؓ says, “When the friends of Zulaika saw Sayyidunā Yūsuf ؑ, they cut their fingers but if they saw my beloved Muhammad ﷺ, they would have cut their hearts, due to the extreme beauty he possessed.”

The scholars say that there are two types of beauty; one is صَبَاحَتْ (Sabāhat): that beauty which at the first instance, a person becomes dazzled and bewitched at the extreme beauty. This was the case of Sayyidunā Yūsuf ؑ, thus, when the women folk of Egypt, the friends of Zulaika, glanced at Yūsuf ؑ, they could not endure his intense beauty as the Qur’ān speaks,

فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ

“When they saw him (Yūsuf), they felt amazed and (without realising) they cut their hands (instead of the fruits).” (12:31)

In contrary to this, the beauty of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was مَلَاَحَتْ, which is that beauty which gradually increases. Hence, the beauty of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was such that the more the Sahābah ﷺ stayed in his company, the more they acknowledged his extreme beauty.

2nd reason: كَمَالٌ (Excellence)

What can we say about his excellence! Allāh ﷻ Himself acknowledges

and praises his excellence. He proclaims,

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَّ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

“Indeed you are upon a very sublime character.” (68:04)

In another verse, He says,

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

“We have sent you as a mercy to the entire universe.” (21:107)

For the Holy Prophet’s ﷺ advent into the world, our forefather Sayyidunā Ibrāheem ؑ supplicated to Allāh ﷻ,

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ

“O’ our Lord, send to them a Messenger from amongst them who recites upon them Your verses and teaches them the Book and wisdom and purifies them.” (2:129)

Regarding him, Sayyidunā Eesā ؑ gave the glad-tiding.

وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ

“I am giving the glad-tiding of a Messenger who will come after me whose name will be Ahmad.” (61:06)

His status is only second to Allāh ﷻ.

3rd reason: كَوَالٍ (Contribution)

Subhān-Allāh! What can we say about his contribution! In the Holy Qur’ān, Allāh ﷻ has not reminded about His favours as much as He has reminded us about the favour and bounty of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Allāh ﷻ says,

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

“Indeed, Allāh has favoured the believers when He sent upon them a Messenger from amongst themselves, to recite His verses upon them, to purify them and to teach them the Book and wisdom and indeed, prior to this, they were in clear deviation.” (3:164)

In short, the Holy Prophet ﷺ possessed all the highest qualities to qualify him to be the only true role model for the entire mankind. The Sahābah ؓ realised this and fully committed themselves to love him and follow his footsteps for eternal success.

Sayyidunā Umar Fārooq ؓ

Let me narrate some incidents of the pious so we can take a lesson from these incidents and try to follow their footsteps.

Once, Sayyidunā Umar Fārooq ؓ was seated with his cabinet when an ignorant person came in and abruptly retorted, “O’ the son of Khattāb,

and praises his excellence. He proclaims,

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَّ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

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Sayyidunā Umar Fārooq ؓ

Let me narrate some incidents of the pious so we can take a lesson from these incidents and try to follow their footsteps.

Once, Sayyidunā Umar Fārooq ؓ was seated with his cabinet when an ignorant person came in and abruptly retorted, “O’ the son of Khattāb,

you do not distribute the booty fairly and you are not just. Sayyidunā Umar ؓ was furious and he was about to pounce on the person. The person's nephew (Hur Ibn Qais ؓ) intervened and said,

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ

“Grasp forgiveness, enjoin good and ignore the ignorant ones.” (7:199)

When the verse of the Holy Qur'an echoed into his ears, Sayyidunā Umar ؓ immediately halted and sat down. The Hadeeth attributes the quality, “He was very practicing upon the Holy Qur'an.” (Bukhāri)

Love for the Sake of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and Hate for the Sake of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

Sayyidunā Umar ؓ once entered the Masjid and noticed that a pipe from Sayyidunā Abbās's ؓ gutter was located in the property of the Masjid, because of which the water from his roof would flow into the Masjid property. Sayyidunā Umar ؓ reasoned that since this pipe was benefiting only one person, it was against the respect of the Masjid to have it there. He therefore gave the instruction for the pipe to be removed.

When Sayyidunā Abbās ؓ found out about this, he approached Sayyidunā Umar ؓ and asked why the pipe was taken down. Sayyidunā Umar ؓ explained to him that the Masjid was not a private property and therefore, it was not permissible for any person to use the property for his own benefit.

“Do you know how that pipe came to be there?” Sayyidunā Abbās ؓ

asked. “It was there from the time of the Prophet ﷺ and the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself gave permission for it to be placed there.”

“Did the Holy Prophet ﷺ really give permission for it to be placed there?” Sayyidunā Umar ؓ asked.

“He certainly did,” Sayyidunā Abbās ؓ replied.

“Come with me then,” Sayyidunā Umar ؓ said to Sayyidunā Abbās ؓ. They then went to the place where the pipe was and Sayyidunā Umar ؓ bent down in a bowing position. “Now get on to my back and replace the pipe.” Sayyidunā Umar ؓ said.

“I will rather get someone else to do it,” Sayyidunā Abbās ؓ said.

Sayyidunā Umar ؓ however said, “Who was I to take down something that our beloved Prophet ﷺ allowed to be put up. Because I have committed such a serious wrong, the least discipline I can suffer is for you to stand on my back and replace the pipe.” Sayyidunā Abbās ؓ then did as Sayyidunā Umar ؓ had instructed and the pipe has remained where it is until this day.

This is what our beloved Prophet ﷺ meant when he said, “Whoever loves for the sake of Allāh ﷻ and dislikes for the sake of Allāh ﷻ has perfected his Imān.” Because of these qualities, the Sahābah ؓ achieved what they achieved.

In the books of history, it is mentioned that after Egypt was conquered by the Muslims, the newly appointed governor of Egypt, Sayyidunā Amr Ibn Ās ؓ one day held an open discussion day in his court. Someone told him, “O Ameer! During the ancient times, there was a custom which the

locals practiced that kept the River Nile flowing. On the eleventh day of every lunar month, we would take a young girl with the consent of her parents, adorn her with the best clothes and the finest jewellery and sacrifice her to the River Nile."

When he heard this, Sayyidunā Amr Ibn Ās ؓ said that this practice is most certainly not acceptable or permissible in Islām and that Islām has come in order to remove such evil customs. That year, this evil custom was abandoned and it so happened that the River Nile started drying out. Many people were forced to abandon their homes and migrate.

Sayyidunā Amr ؓ wrote to Ameerul Mu'mineen regarding the situation. Sayyidunā Umar ؓ wrote back that indeed Islām has come to destroy such evil customs. Together with this reply, he wrote another letter which he said should be thrown into the River Nile. The governor read out this letter, which contained the following;

"From Abdullāh (the servant of Allāh ﷻ) Umar, Ameerul-Mumineen to the River Nile, Ammā Ba'd (i.e after praises unto Allāh ﷻ and salutations upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ). If you flow on your own accord, then do not flow but if Allāh ﷻ, the One and Mighty makes you flow, then we beseech Allāh ﷻ, the One and Mighty to make you flow."

The governor of Egypt threw this letter into the River Nile and when the people awoke the next morning, they saw that during the course of one night, Allāh ﷻ had made the River Nile rise more than a 100 hand lengths. In this way, Allāh ﷻ had put an end to the evil custom of girl sacrifice. The greatness of Allāh ﷻ was manifested in this way and ever since then, the river continued flowing.

It is indeed true that whosoever becomes Allāh's ﷻ, Allāh ﷻ becomes his. When Allāh ﷻ becomes his, then all the creation of Allāh ﷻ obey his instructions. The Sahābah ؓ had sacrificed everything of theirs for Allāh ﷻ, hence Allāh ﷻ had made the entire creation subservient to them.

Even those matters which were concerning the Holy Prophet's ﷺ noble habits, his food, clothing and social etiquette to the minutest thing, the Sahābah's ؓ complied and followed. Sayyidunā Anas ؓ says, "I once accompanied the Holy Prophet ﷺ for a meal. I saw him eating the pieces of pumpkin around his plate with relish. Immediately, I created a liking for pumpkins." It was to this extent that Sayyidunā Anas ؓ, for the rest of his life, always added pieces of pumpkin in his curry whenever he had food prepared. Allāhu Akbar!

There are thousands of such incidents mentioned in the Ahādeeth books. Those who followed the Sahābah's ؓ, also became successful for their compliance. The successors (Tābieen) and their successors (Tabi-Tābieen) became successful for what reason? It was for following them on the matters of Deen. When we study the lives of the four Imāms, our elders, their piety, their knowledge and their abstinence, then we will come to the conclusion of their high status.

Only One Door

Sālim ؓ was the grandson of Sayyidunā Umar Fārooq ؓ. Once he was near the Ka'bah when he met Hishām Ibn Abdul Malik, who was the Caliph of the time. Hishām greeted Sālim ؓ and then said, "Please tell me if there is anything that you need and I will see that it is done."

“O Hishām,” Sālim ؓ said, “I feel ashamed to ask from anyone else when I am right in front of Allāh’s ﷻ House. Our respect for Allāh ﷻ does not allow us to stretch our hands before anyone else but Allāh ﷻ.” Hishām could say nothing and kept silent.

It so happened that Sālim ؓ left the Haram at that very time that Hishām did. When Hishām saw Sālim ؓ outside, he came close and asked, “You may now tell me how I may be of service to you.”

However, Sālim ؓ said, “Tell me what it is I can ask from you? Can I ask for Deen or something of this world?”

Hishām knew that as far as Deen was concerned, Sālim ؓ was one of the greatest scholars of the time. He therefore said, “You may ask me for something of this world.” Sālim ؓ immediately said, “I have never asked anything of this world even from Allāh ﷻ. How can I ask it from you!” Hishām was shocked to learn that there really are people who ask all their needs only from Allāh ﷻ. The truth is that people who know how to ask from Allāh ﷻ will never stretch their hands before people.

Respect and Love for Hadeeth

The lessons of Hadeeth of Imām Mālik ؓ were such that they inspired awe into anyone witnessing them. Whenever Imām Mālik ؓ came to deliver classes, he would take a bath or do Wudhu with utmost care, apply fragrance and comb his hair neatly. He would then enter the venue with utmost respect and reverence.

Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Mubārak ؓ narrates that he once came in the

presence of Imām Mālik ؓ who was narrating the Ahādeeth. Whilst narrating the Ahādeeth, Imām Sāhib’s face turned yellow. It appeared that Imām Sāhib ؓ was in great difficulty, but he continued delivering his lessons. Upon completion, he turned to me and said, “Look at my back, please!” When I removed the clothing from his back, I saw a scorpion there. The scorpion stung Imām Sāhib ؓ at least 17 times. I asked, “Why did you not inform us earlier? In reply, Imām Sāhib ؓ said, “I exercised patience in honour and respect of the Hadeeth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Allāhu-Akbar! What immense love these Salafus-Sāliheen had for the Holy Prophet ﷺ!

What fruit came out of this love and respect. Imām Mālik ؓ would say, “Not a single night passes by for me, that I have not been honoured with the vision of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Subhān-Allāh.

Imām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal ؓ

Imām Shāfi’ee ؓ invites his great student Imām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal ؓ for a meal in his house. He, in advance informs his daughter to prepare the food and provide all the necessary hospitality for this saintly personality. After he came and consumed the meal, he stayed the night and only left the following day after Fajr Sālah.

When Imām Shāfi’ee ؓ came back home, his daughter put forward three objections which were not apparently appropriate for a person of the calibre of Imām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal ؓ.

She says, “I was informed that he was a very prominent Imām but I found three matters objectionable. Firstly, he ate to his fill which true pious peo-

ple don't. Secondly, he didn't perform Tahajjud Sālah because the water and Miswāk was left unused. Thirdly, he performed his Fajr Salāh without Wudhu. Imām Shāfi'ee initially rebuked his daughter but in private he put forward the objections of his daughter.

Take attentive note of his reply to the three objections. Regarding the food, he said, "I felt the great Noor and blessing in the food and the more I ate the more I felt the spiritual boost in myself, hence I kept eating to my full. Secondly, because of the blessings of the food I remained awake the entire night contemplating upon the verses of the Holy Qur'ān from which I deduced numerous Masāil. Thirdly, I didn't go to sleep and I read Fajr with the same Wudhu of Ishā, i.e. my Wudhu was intact.

Subhān-Allāh, what level of piety they had. This was the situation of all our pious predecessors. How did they achieve success? One thing in common in all our pious elders is the piety and humility they had.

If we want to become successful in our lives, then we need to live our lives similar to theirs. Read about them instead of pointing fingers at them. What does the Holy Qur'ān say?

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

"Indeed in their stories, there is a lesson for those who are intelligent." (12:111)

Our scholars who we have gained our knowledge from, each one was a beacon of guidance in themselves. I will just mention a few incidents of their inspirational lives, which will shed light of how great these people were.

Shaykh Ashraf Ali Thānwi

Hakeemul-Ummah Shaykh Ashraf Ali Thānwi's rich legacy is not hidden from anyone's eyes. He has in his lifetime written over a thousand books which have benefitted the Muslim community tremendously. These have been a source of guidance to this day. They cover most of the aspects of faith and has a transformative affect on their audiences.

He once had a lecture scheduled in Jaunpūr. A large crowd of critics turned up to the lecture who were apposing his presence in the city. He was given a note which stated: "You are a weaver. You are an ignorant person. You are a disbeliever. You should be careful about what you say in your lecture." Before beginning his lecture, Shaykh Ashraf Ali Thānwi read out the contents of the note to the audience, and then said: As to the assertion about me being a weaver, there is nothing wrong with that. I am not here to negotiate a matrimonial proposal, I have merely travelled here in order to propagate Allah's Deen. This has nothing to do with my profession. Moreover this is not something that one determines by choice. Allāh decides the circumstances of one's birth and death however He wills. All people are created by Him, and if their conduct is sincere, they will do well. This is my reply in principle. However, let me clarify here and now, that I am not a weaver. This is not our family profession or my profession.

As to the next point that I am an ignorant person, I readily accept this. Rather, I am the most ignorant person of all. However, I will keep on quoting what I have heard from my elders and what I have learnt from books. If anyone is in doubt about anything which I convey, they need not follow it.

As far as the charge of being a disbeliever, I do not have to say much, I

recite publicly before all of you. I testify that there is no god besides Allāh ﷻ; and I testify that Muhammad ﷺ is the Messenger of Allāh ﷻ! Had I been, Allāh ﷻ forbid, a disbeliever before this moment, in view of my testimony I am no longer such.

Finally, I am asked to be careful in what I say. Let me tell you that delivering sermons is not my profession, I say only what I know. Also, I only deliver such sermons when people insist that I should lecture. If you prefer, I will not even say a word. As to the advice about being careful, I do not provoke anyone. Neither do I intentionally say anything which offend or cause discord. However, if I have to mention something that refutes innovative practices while explaining the principles of Shariah, I feel no need to hesitate in this regard. Otherwise, it would be tantamount to being dishonest in matters of belief.

Upon hearing all of this, one of the influential critics roared, "Some wicked person must have written that note, go ahead with your sermon! Are you not a Fārooqi (a descendant of Sayyidunā Umar Fārooq ؓ)? To this, Shaykh Thānwi ﷺ replied, "I am a Fārooqi, yet the people of this place call us weavers."

Eventually, he delivered his sermon, which was a huge success. Unintentionally, during that lecture he mentioned something about innovations in belief. Although he had granted people the permission to stop him from saying anything further, no one could muster the courage to disrupt his lecture.

One of the adversary scholar present declared, "Brothers, you know that I practice innovations in matters of belief. However, the truth is that

Shaykh Thānwi's ﷺ stance, which he presented just now is correct. Allāhu Akbar!!

One of the main features of our elders was their devotion to Allāh ﷻ. Shaykh Muhammad Yāseen ؒ, the father of Mufti Shafee Sāhib ؒ says, "I was a witness to that golden era of Dārul-Uloom Deoband, when everyone associated with it, ranging from the principal, to the teachers, officers, attendants and gate keepers, were no less than Awliyā (the friends of Allāh ﷻ). In the daytime, it served as a religious institution and at night it was the Sufi lodge of Awliyā. One could hear the Qur'anic recitation and supplications from the rooms.

This was the outstanding feature of Dārul-Uloom Deoband.

Proper Method of Cleaning the Dastarkhān (Table-cloth)

Speaking about Dārul-Uloom Deoband, an incident comes to mind. One senior scholar of Dārul-Uloom Deoband was Shaykh Sayyid Asghar Husain Sāhib ؒ. He was a great and remarkable Wali of Allāh ﷻ. Mufti Shafee Sāhib ؒ (his student) says that once I went into his presence. He said that it was mealtime, so Mufti Sāhib should join him for a meal.

After the meal, I was folding the Dastarkhān to go and shake it out, when Shaykh caught hold of my hand and said, "What are you doing."

I replied that I was going to shake the Dastarkhān out.

Shaykh asked, "Do you know how to shake a Dastarkhān out?"

I replied, "Hadhrat, what expertise is there in shaking out a Dastarkhān that one has to learn? It merely has to be taken outside and shaken out."

recite publicly before all of you. I testify that there is no god besides Allāh ﷻ; and I testify that Muhammad ﷺ is the Messenger of Allāh ﷻ! Had I been, Allāh ﷻ forbid, a disbeliever before this moment, in view of my testimony I am no longer such.

Finally, I am asked to be careful in what I say. Let me tell you that delivering sermons is not my profession, I say only what I know. Also, I only deliver such sermons when people insist that I should lecture. If you prefer, I will not even say a word. As to the advice about being careful, I do not provoke anyone. Neither do I intentionally say anything which offend or cause discord. However, if I have to mention something that refutes innovative practices while explaining the principles of Shariah, I feel no need to hesitate in this regard. Otherwise, it would be tantamount to being dishonest in matters of belief.

Upon hearing all of this, one of the influential critics roared, "Some wicked person must have written that note, go ahead with your sermon! Are you not a Fārooqi (a descendant of Sayyidunā Umar Fārooq ﷺ)? To this, Shaykh Thānwi ﷺ replied, "I am a Fārooqi, yet the people of this place call us weavers."

Eventually, he delivered his sermon, which was a huge success. Unintentionally, during that lecture he mentioned something about innovations in belief. Although he had granted people the permission to stop him from saying anything further, no one could muster the courage to disrupt his lecture.

One of the adversary scholar present declared, "Brothers, you know that I practice innovations in matters of belief. However, the truth is that

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Shaykh explains, "I asked you whether you know how to shake out a Dastarkhān or not. It is clear that you do not know the proper procedure when shaking out a Dastarkhān."

I said, "Please teach me, then!"

Shaykh replied, "Yes, there is an art in shaking it out."

He then proceeded to open the Dastarkhān again and he separated the pieces of meat to one side. He put the bones which had a little bit of meat there on one side, he put the small pieces of bread on one side, he placed the small crumbs of bread on one side and he told me.

"Look now! Here are four things and I have separated each one of them to one side. These pieces of meat which I placed on this side are for the cats who know that after each meal they will find these pieces here for them to eat. The bones which I placed on that corner are for the dogs in the neighborhood that know they will find them there. The pieces of bread which I placed on the wall are for the birds that know they will find them there and the crumbs of bread which I placed on the ground are the share of the ants. All this is sustenance from Allāh ﷻ, and none of it should be wasted." Mufti Shafee Sāhib ﷺ says, "Since that day we realised that to shake out the Dastarkhān is also an art, which we need to teach others."

Allāhu Akbar!! What is our condition today. We will shake the Dastarkhān full of food in the rubbish bin. We very rarely have regard for the blessings which Allāh ﷻ has bestowed upon us. May Allāh ﷻ give us the Tawfeeq to value the blessings of Allāh ﷻ like our Salafus-Sāliheen did, Āmeen!

Academic Achievements

In every field these scholars followed the footsteps of the Salafus-Sāliheen. Their academic achievements are amazing. In the service of the Holy Qur'ān, the translation and commentary of the Holy Qur'ān exceeds more than 250. Many of the commentaries are in numerous volumes in Arabic, Urdu, English, Bangla. Tafseer Bayānul-Qur'ān has been written by Hakeemul-Ummah Shaykh Ashraf Ali Thānwi ﷺ. Shaykh Mufti Shafee Sāhib ﷺ has written Ma'āriful-Qur'ān in 8 big volumes. Shaykh Idrees Kandhalwi ﷺ has written in 8 volumes, the Tafseer also named Ma'āriful-Qur'ān. Shaykh Mufti Āshiq Ilāhi Bulandsheri ﷺ has written Anwārul-Bayān in 10 volumes. In the field of Fiqh, no one can bring forth the likes of Shaykh Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi ﷺ, Mufti Azeezur-Rahmān ﷺ, Mufti Shafee Sāhib ﷺ and Mufti Kifāyatullāh Sāhib ﷺ.

Someone asked Shaykhul Hind Maulāna Mahmoodul Hasan Sāhib ﷺ, "Hadhrat, your publications were not found by us, yet you are called such a big scholar." He replied, "Brother, my publications are present in every field, which would you like to see."

If you want to see my publications in the field of Tafseer, then look at my student Shabbir Ahmad Uthmāni. If you would like to see my publications in the field of Hadeeth, then look at my student Anwar Shah Kashmeeri. If you want to see my publication in the field of Fiqh, then look at my student Azeezur-Rahmān and Kifāyatullāh. If you would like to see my publications in the field of politics, then look at my student Ubaidullāh Sindi. If you would like to see my publications in the field of Tasawwuf, then look at my student, the Imām of Tasawwuf, Ashraf Ali

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Thānwi. If you would like to read about my wisdom and patience, then look at my student, Hussain Ahmad Madani. If you want to see my Da'wah and Tableegh work, then look at my student Ilyās Khandalwi. My every student is a star in every field". In history, there are two individuals regarding whom history testifies that their students (except the Prophets and the Sahābahs) have been incomparable with those before or after till the Day of Judgement.

In the golden era, the great Imām Abū Haneefah, Nūmān Ibn Thābit ؓ was a great jurist and Mujtahid whose each and every student are such that they were the Imāms of their time whose examples are not present in the world.

There is a Hadeeth in Mishkāt,

"Near the end of times, will rise a group of people they will work in the footsteps of those before them, they will do work like them, as a result they will get the same reward. They will enjoin goodness and prohibit evil and they will fight the people of corruption."

History repeats itself. In the previous generation, Imām Abū Haneefah ؓ has passed whose mastery in Fiqh no one could match. In this time, we had the like of Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi ؓ, the Scholar of Deoband, which the world could not produce the likes of. If in that time the cornerstone of steadfastness was Imām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal ؓ, then history produced the likes of Mahmoodul Hasan ؓ whose example the world cannot give.

In the previous generations, a teacher and student wrote Tafseer. It is taught in our institute called Tafseer Jalālayn. Allāh ؓ produced from our respected elders, a teacher and a student, Shaykhul-Hind ؓ, the teacher and Shaykhul Islām Shabbir Ahmad Uthmāni ؓ, the student. The teacher and student wrote a Tafseer called Tafseer Uthmāni, whose example the world cannot produce. From previous generations, (may Allāh ؓ bestow the divine blessings on the grave of Imām Bukhāri ؓ). Imām Bukhāri ؓ wrote Bukhāri and to explain that, Shaykh Anwar Shāh Kashmeeri ؓ wrote a commentary called Faydhul Bāri which history has not been able to produce the likes of. In the previous generations, Imām Muslim ؓ wrote Saheeh Muslim. Shaykh Shabbir Ahmad Uthmāni ؓ wrote a commentary of it called Fathul-Mulhim in five volumes which till this day, the world has not produced the likes of. Imām Abū Dāwood ؓ has written Abū Dāwood. Shaykh Khaleel Ahmad Sahāranpuri ؓ wrote its commentary, Bazlul-Majhood whose example the world cannot give. Imām Malik ؓ wrote Muwatta Mālik and Shaykhul-Hadeeth, Muhammad Zakariyyah ؓ wrote its commentary, Awjazul-Masālik. An Arab Shaykh said, "Shaykh Zakariyyah ؓ has written such a commentary after reading one questions, if Imām Mālik ؓ was the follower of Imām Abū Haneefah ؓ as well."

Our each scholar is incomparable, miraculous and unique.

If I say this, I will not be exaggerating, if fragrance emanated from the grave of Imām Bukhāri ؓ, then for six months fragrance emanated from the grave of Imāmul-Awliya Shaykh Ahmad Ali Lāhori ؓ. Now, there are thousands from whose graves emanate the fragrance of Jannah.

Allāh ؓ has shown that they are the people of truth, these are the beloved of Allāh ؓ who are fulfilling the mission which Allāh ؓ sent His beloved

HOW TO BECOME A FRIEND OF ALLĀH

Maulāna Ashraf Ali Thānwi ؒ states that there are a number of acts that may lead the creation towards a strong relationship with Allāh ﷻ. These actions include excessive remembrance of Allāh ﷻ, observance of Sunnah in all matters, keeping company with the pious who have a strong relationship with Allāh ﷻ, being thankful for the bounties of Allāh ﷻ, being steadfast in following the rulings of Shari'ah and finally asking Allāh ﷻ (Du'a) abundantly.

The friends of Allāh ﷻ have been described in detail in the Holy Qur'an and Āhadeeth. This book endeavors its readers to help create a bond with Allāh ﷻ in attaining His friendship as He is the sole Creator of all material and immaterial things. It is only through Allāh's ﷻ friendship, an individual will achieve happiness in this life and the hereafter, hence eliminate worries, sadness, depression, anxiety and misery in this world.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shaykh Mufti Saiful Islām born in 1974 is a traditionally trained scholar. He memorised the Holy Qur'an at the age of 13. He studied the Arabic language and various other traditional Islamic sciences at Dārul Uloom, Bury, UK, under many auspicious scholars notably, Shaykh Muhammad Yūsuf Motala. There he received authorisations in various books including the six major books of Ahādeeth. He studied Iftā under one of the senior Muftis in the UK, Shaykh Mufti Shabbir Ahmad.

In 1996 Shaykh Mufti Saiful Islām established Jāmiyah Khātamun Nabiyeen (JKN). Today, JKN has accelerated to become recognised worldwide as an institute of learning. As well as the Founder, Principal and Director of JKN, Shaykh Mufti Saiful Islām took up responsibilities in many other departments locally, nationally and internationally.

He is the Editor of the famous family magazine Al-Mu'min. He currently holds the posts as the President of Tawak'kulia Jāmi Masjid in Bradford and Chairperson of Al-Kawthar Welfare Foundation. He is also the Patron of Al-Mu'min Primary School and Olive Secondary Schools in Bradford.